

The Arkansas Minority Health Commission MINORITY HEALTH INITIATIVE

The Arkansas Minority Health Commission administers the Minority Health Initiative, which aims to ensure all minority Arkansans have access to health care that is equal to the care provided to other citizens of the state, and to seek ways to provide education, address issues and prevent diseases and conditions that are prevalent among minority populations.

The commission accomplishes this through grassroots outreach (education and awareness), public policy, collaboration/coordination, research and pilot projects. The initiative monitors disparities in Arkansas, reports them to the legislature and provides recommendations for how to fix them.

Through a strategic planning process in 2008, AMHC performed an analysis of health problems that disproportionately affect minorities in the state of Arkansas. It was identified that while there were increased incidence, prevalence, disparity and mortality from HIV/AIDS and Sickle Cell Disease in minority communities, there was not clear investment in primary prevention programs reaching grassroots minority communities.

The Commission has partnered with Sickle Cell Support Services, UAMS Partners for Inclusive Communities and the Arkansas Legislative Taskforce on Sickle Cell Disease to form a wide-reaching outreach initiative. The commission supported a youth camp for children affected by sickle cell disease in 2009, which Gabrielle attended. The AMHC organized a Sickle Cell Roundtable in 2010, bringing 30+ sickle cell disease public health and grassroots leaders together for the first time in recent history.



WISE BEYOND HER YEARS, GABRIELLE NOW PLAYS MENTOR TO HER YOUNGER COUSIN WHO ALSO HAS THE DISEASE. "I TELL HIM TO TALK TO SOMEONE IF HE IS IN PAIN AND NOT TO KEEP IT TO HIMSELF IF HE IS IN CRISIS," SHE SAID.

GABRIELLE BRUMFIELD, AGE 16, LITTLE ROCK

The commission's additional key foci are health care workforce diversity, nutrition and physical fitness and the development of a searchable navigation system for minority health resources in Arkansas. These combined efforts help the commission improve minority Arkansans access to proper health care and ensure prevention programs are in place to address primary concerns.

